

Message Text

SECRET

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17

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 OMB-01 NSCE-00 SAM-01 SAJ-01 NIC-01

ACDA-05 EB-07 AID-05 EUR-12 /098 W

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R 290529Z JAN 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3642

INFO AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

S E C R E T HONG KONG 1061

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, VS

SUBJECT: CHINESE MEDIA REACTION TO CURRENT OFFENSIVE IN VIETNAM

REF: A) TOKYO 1034; B) HONG KONG 811

SUMMARY: IN FIRST SELF-GENERATED ARTICLE WE HAVE NOTICED IN 1975 ON THE VIETNAM OFFENSIVE, NCNA HAS TAKEN A CAUTIOUS APPROACH. CONDEMNING THE THIEU REGIME, NCNA CONSIDERS THE OFFENSIVE AS "COUNTERATTACKS IN SELF DEFENSE" BUT ONLY PREDICTS DEFEAT IF SAIGON CONTINUES TO SABOTAGE THE PARIS AGREEMENT. THIS LUKEWARM PRC REACTION MIGHT WELL BE A FURTHER INDICATION OF STRAINS IN THE HANOI-PEKING RELATIONSHIP. END

SUMMARY.

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1. THUS FAR IN 1975, THE PRC MEDIA HAS REFRAINED FROM DIRECTLY COMMENTING ON THE NEW COMMUNIST OFFENSIVE. DURING THE FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY, NCNA CARRIED LITTLE NEWS FROM VIETNAM AND, SINCE THEN, NCNA HAS BEEN REPLAYING IN SUMMARY MANY OF THE PRG AND DRVN STATEMENTS. ON JANUARY 28, NCNA CARRIES ITS FIRST COMMENT ON VIETNAM (IN A CORRESPONDENT ARTICLE) THAT WE HAVE NOTED THIS YEAR. THE ARTICLE CONDEMNS THE THIEU REGIME FOR REPEATED VIOLATIONS OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT AND POINTS OUT SAIGON HAS US SUPPORT. IT ACCUSES THE US OF MAINTAINING MILITARY PERSONNEL DISGUISED AS CIVILIANS IN SOUTH VIETNAM, IL-

LEGALLY IMPORTING WAR MATERIAL, CARRYING OUT RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS OVER NORTH VIETNAM AND LIBERATED AREAS IN THE SOUTH, AND GUIDING SAIGON'S BOMBING RAIDS IN THE SOUTH.

2. THESE VIOLATIONS BY SAIGON, HOWEVER, ARE DESCRIBED AS HAVING BEEN "BOUND TO BRING ABOUT COUNTERATTACKS IN SELF DEFENSE" AND THE CAPTURE OF PHUOC LONG IS DEPICTED IN THIS LIGHT AS BEING A "COUNTEROFFENSIVE." THE ARTICLE ALSO MENTIONS THE ANTI-THIEU MOVEMENT "AGAINST CORRUPTION, AGAINST DICTATORSHIP AND FOR THIEU'S OVERTHROW," BUT DOES NOT INDICATE PRC SUPPORT FOR THE MOVEMENT. NCNA CAREFULLY LIMITS ITS PREDICTION: "THE THIEU CLIQUE IS BOUND TO MEET WITH MORE DISASTROUS DEFEATS AS LONG AS IT CONTINUES TO ACT BELLIGERENTLY AND SABOTAGES THE PARIS AGREEMENT."

3. THUS FAR, THE PRC MEDIA HAS ALSO FAILED TO REPORT DIRECTLY THE US JANUARY 11 NOTE ON VIETNAM, ALTHOUGH NCNA MENTIONED IT IN REPLAYING PRC REJECTION OF ITS CONTENTS.

4. AT THE SAME TIME, NCNA COVERAGE OF THE SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT IS LIMITED ONLY TO REPORTS OF MEETINGS IN STOCKHOLM AND HANOI, AND DOES NOT INDICATE THAT ANY SIMILAR MEETING WAS HELD IN CHINA. THIS IS IN MARKED CONTRAST TO LAST YEAR WHEN PEOPLE'S DAILY CARRIED AN EDITORIAL EXHORTING THAT THE AGREEMENT SHOULD BE "THOROUGHLY IMPLEMENTED."

5. THE NCNA ARTICLE NOTABLY DOES NOT MENTION SPECIFIC PRC SUPPORT FOR THE PRG AND DRVN. NCNA ALSO FAILED TO REPORT A MEETING

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BETWEEN PRC VICE FOREIGN MINISTER HAN NIEN-LUNG AND THE DRVN AND PRG REPRESENTATIVES IN PEKING. ACCORDING TO HANOI'S VNA ON JANUARY 24, DURING THIS "RECENT" MEETING, HAN STATED THAT SUPPORT OF THE VIETNAMESE PEOPLE'S STRUGGLES IS "AN INTERNATIONALIST DUTY WE MUST FULFILL."

6. THIS LUKEWARM PRC SUPPORT OF THE CURRENT OFFENSIVE IN SOUTH VIETNAM MAY WELL BE A FURTHER INDICATION OF STRAINS IN THE

PEKING-HANOI RELATIONSHIP, AND FITS WELL WITH REPORTED NORTH VIETNAMESE DISCONTENT (REFS A AND B) WITH LACK OF SUPPORT (BOTH MATERIALLY AND POLITICALLY) BY THE PRC. REPEATED PRC PUBLICATION RECENTLY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS PROVING THE LONG CHINESE OCCUPATION OF THE PARACELS HAVE UNDOUBTEDLY FURTHER IRRITATED HANOI, WHICH MAINTAINS ITS OWN CLAIMS TO THE ISLANDS.
CROSS

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